

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 500

July 9, 2004

Members Present

Leslie Elpers
Gretchen Schmitz
Elizabeth Spaugh
Stacey Ismail (for Rick Horrell)

Melodie Friedebach
Alt for Medicaid – Amy Kessel
Valeri Lane
Richard Strecker

Darin Pries
Kathy Daulton
Sharon Hailey
Sue Allen

Members Not Present

Vicki Walker
Margaret Franklin

Pamela Byars
Kathy Fuger

Joan Harter

DESE Staff Present

Alycia Haug
Joyce Jackman
Debby Parsons

Mary Corey
Kate Numerick

Amanda Wogan
Dale Carlson

To review copies of handouts mentioned in the minutes below, go to the following website:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/SICCMtgdates.htm> and click on “Handouts” for the meeting you are interested in.

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions – Elizabeth Spaugh called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Introductions were made.

Approval of SICC Minutes – Amy Kessel noted that Sherl Taylor’s name was misspelled. Under old business, Valeri Lane noted that she was to contact Medicaid, not Leslie Elpers.

Sharon Hailey made a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections. Susan Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed.

State Agency Reports

Update on DESE’s “priority task list” – Melodie Friedebach stated that she would review the list in the order it was numbered in the minutes from the previous month. However, some of the items are listed as separate agenda items and will be discussed later in the meeting.

1. Interagency Agreements – will be discussed later in the meeting.
2. Legislation for family cost participation – was indicated that this was no longer an option at the last meeting.
3. Standards of practice in early intervention – will be discussed later in the meeting.
4. Parent Survey – will be discussed later in the meeting.
5. Appropriate Referrals – nothing has been done with this item.
6. Monitoring System – no update at this time.
7. New RFP – DESE still needs to come up with the outcomes/performance measures to decide if the changes made have been effective. Some ideas will be present in the finance discussion later in the meeting. No specific measures have been taken at this time, but DESE will have something to present at the next SICC meeting for review. SICC members (Sharon Hailey, Valeri Lane, and Richard Strecker) will work with DESE, then it was decided that everyone could participate via e-mail. Val

clarified that this is for us to have indicators to see if the changes that were made are working, for future use with the new Phase II SPOEs.

8. Training – Debby and Dale will discuss further for new SPOE training.
9. Data System - no update at this time.
10. Training Committee – The CSPD committee has been identified and the date has been set for August 5th. A letter will go out early next week to those who will be serving on the committee. The names of those on the original CSPD committee are listed in last month's minutes. There will be additional people on the committee. If anyone else wants to be a part of this committee, then they can contact Kate Numerick.
11. New RFP (role of the SPOEs) – Dale and Debby will discuss this item later.
12. Provider System – The No Provider Available option is now available. DESE needs everybody's help by using this option to make sure the data is accurate for tracking purposes. Valeri posed the question to all present asking if they were using this option. Many stated that there were instances where this option could not be used. Kate Numerick alluded to an e-mail that was sent out yesterday. E-mail DESE with issues that cannot be put the CFO system because DESE can keep the information as a modified solution. Send the issues to webreplyspeep@dese.mo.gov. There is a data staff member that will be processing this information so we can include it with what is being tracked in the CFO's system.
13. This item was closed at the last meeting.
14. Philosophy Document – The belief statement was updated at the NECTAC meeting. This will be included with other discussion this afternoon involving the NECTAC meetings.

Melodie Friedebach also passed around a contact listing of DESE staff that work with the First Steps program. This document will be sent out to others at a later date.

OSEP's Response to APR (Annual Performance Report) and Verification Visit – Debby Parsons brought these two letters for handouts. It was determined that one document was copied erroneously and there was not a copy of the Annual Performance Report. Copies of the Annual Performance Report were requested and brought over for the committee to review later. If there were any questions, they could be brought to the next meeting. The purpose of the verification visit to Missouri was to determine how DESE uses the data system, general supervision systems, and assessment. Debby went through the available document and summarized some of the findings.

Monitoring was an issue because it had stopped since the redesign, but DESE has started the monitoring process again. The initial SPOEs were monitored, but not the provider contracts. DESE is currently working on redeveloping the monitoring system. Information available that can be pulled by SPOE to identify areas of concern before the monitoring takes place. Melodie Friedebach indicated that the process for monitoring the providers has still not been determined. There were some weaknesses pointed out such as the staff does not interview parents and others, but at that time DESE was preparing the survey. One issue was that DESE was not being exact enough. In both Part B and Part C, DESE uses an 80% standard. OSEP wants 100% compliance and the 20% pointed out to the entity and corrected. Valeri Lane stated that most of the timeline issues were due to understaffing. DESE attempted to resolve this with the new RFP. Joyce Jackman stated that in the new RFP the SPOEs can demonstrate a hardship case and OA would make final judgment. At this time, there is no back up plan if a SPOE is found out of compliance. If DESE had to cancel a contract, then DESE would have to go in and provide the services. This would stop services for a period of time. Sharon Hailey pointed out that problems should be addressed at an earlier point, so it does not reach a crisis point. It was suggested that if SPOEs are not doing their job, then, as with providers, they should be dropped. Melodie stated that self assessment was brought up as a possibility. Some of the entities that DESE monitored no longer exist due to the rebid. The intent is to come up with an action plan with timelines. Part of DESE's plan is to finish development of the new system and progress reports.

There were no issues with complaint and due process. Valeri feels the complaint/due process rate supports the idea that parents do not want to complain for fear that the system will go away. Joyce Jackman commented that a child complaint must be very specific to be investigated. This is not necessarily near the number of issues brought to the department and researched. Elizabeth Spaugh stated that she does bring up issues, but decides how to proceed with the issue after seeing what type of response she is given. DESE now has a call tracking system for Part C. Sharon Hailey stated that some other agencies track this information also. It was suggested

that the SPOEs could give us a sampling of some big issues they have dealt with at their level, but did not send onto DESE. This would show any patterns with reoccurring issues. The role DESE would play in this might simply be to request this information from the SPOE, then discuss it at the SPOE Directors' meeting in September. There are some families that are not far enough into the system to know their rights and where to take their complaints. Tracking these issues might help with future trainings.

The new data system is working. Sharon Hailey questioned respite care for First Steps. It was stated that this would be needed in a situation where the parent has trouble attending IFSP meetings. Prior to the new data system, this number could not be tracked. Valeri Lane stated that it muddies the water by calling it respite care when it is really child care. Can we modify the terminology? The suggestion was made to us "child care to attend a meeting" or anything else to get away from using the term "respite care". There are now pieces from the data system regarding exiting also. The new data system will provide better data now than was available in the past. There was to be a demonstration of the new system at today's meeting. However, that is being moved to the September meeting because it will be closer to being up and running at that time.

DESE has to respond to OSEP's report. One response is due in October and the other one, in the APR, is due next March. Anything out of compliance must be corrected in one year. As the follow-ups progress, DESE will continue to work with OSEP. If DESE is still found out of compliance, then there will be sanctions. A question was raised regarding what type of sanction, and Melodie stated that for school district DESE holds back money. Since schools have other funding sources, it is easy for DESE to apply these sanctions. However, since First Steps is DESE, there is not another funding source. DESE is not sure how the sanctions would be applied to us because of this issue. It was asked when the work with OSEP would get close to current. Debby indicated the work never really does, but the APR deals with current issues.

Parent Survey Responses – The Overall the survey results were positive. Question 5, 9, 11, 12 showed a little more disagreement than the rest of the survey. Valeri Lane had a question regarding SC (question #12) and whether it could be sorted out between intake and independent SC, since the independent SC would routinely have more contact with the families. However, this cannot be done the way the survey is structured at this time. Susan Conklin asked if there were any questions regarding the services and how the family felt about what they were getting. No, but several comments were made regarding this and they widely varied. Valeri stated that a comparison of the comments could be the most helpful part of the survey. However, no one volunteered to do the comparison. Sharon Hailey asked about PR and the public awareness. DHSS was asked if they had anything they could do to promote the program or pass out brochures. Melodie indicated that she had a previous conversation with Rick Horrell regarding this and he was thinking it over. Sue Allen stated that she thought we would do better trying to promote the program with pediatricians rather than hospitals because hospitals have more monetary investments. DESE was asked if the families that left their contact information on the survey would be contacted. Melodie indicated that it has not been determined at this point. One issue brought up in the comments was that the service coordinators give the families a list of providers and the families are to pick one even though they do not know them or that much about the program. Service coordinators do not want to get in the practice recommending certain providers.

These results will be posted on the web. The names of the families and children will be redacted, but not the SC or provider names. Several comments were made that it did not seem fair to post only one side of the story, without posting the SC or providers point of view because there are two sides to every complaint. Many felt that the names of the SC and providers should be removed along with the families. Melodie stated that DESE has constantly heard how there is not enough oversight of the providers. These results are public record and, if requested, DESE would have to give the names. Valeri felt these names should be left on to go to the SPOEs for their records, but not posted on the web. It was also mentioned that DESE should keep the names for monitoring purposes. The SICC suggested that the names be removed and a note posted on the web that a full version can be requested. The suggestion was taken under consideration. Darin Preis stated that when using a statewide system, the data cannot be so subjective, but the SPOEs need it for their internal use. It was mentioned that just because there are positive comments, does not mean best practices are occurring.

Mary Corey also went over an additional handout. DESE used a few questions from the Longitudinal Study and this handout showed a comparison between the national results and our state results. Question 13, 19, 20, 21

were all taken from the NEILs study. Some of the questions were worded the same and some were slightly different, but the results were all similar.

Budget/Finance Update

FY 04 First Steps Year End Report – Dale Carlson provided a handout showing a financial wrap up of the FY 04 First Steps system. The report is not final at this point, but reflects the most accurate data to date. The yellow fields indicate data that has changed since reported at the last SICC meeting. No Medicaid funds have been received for the past few months due to the implementation of the HIPAA reporting process by the CFO. No Medicaid funds will be lost since we can back bill these Medicaid billings. The CFO cut off payments earlier in the fiscal year than expected, so the June amount of \$1,191,636 was lower than anticipated. The final child count includes all children incurring costs for services including evaluations, team meeting, etc. Mary Corey posts First Steps data on the web each month broken out by SPOE region that can be used to help projected analyze SPOE operations (costs for direct services, etc). Melodie Friedebach would like the “direct service costs” indicated on the SICC budget update report broken out by EI services, team meetings, and evaluations to see what is expended in each area. Dale will adjust the reporting format for FY05 to incorporate these changes. The December 1st child count is used for a national comparison, but does not show children with services throughout the year. “All children served” reflects all the children that incurred some cost in the system. DMH service coordinator costs are not reflected on this handout. Darin Preis asked if an average child count would give us a more accurate number. Dale did not think that would make a difference. Joyce pointed out that the 7004 number (all children served in the system) is the most accurate child count available and comes from the data system. Children that have been referred, but not been entered into the system do not have any costs associated with them. Program costs do not accrue until they have been entered into the system.

A supplemental appropriation will be requested again because the FY05 appropriation was \$6 million short. Elizabeth Spaugh asked if there would be any funny money (program revenue appropriated from funds that have no money available to expend such as the “First Steps Fund” used in the FY05 appropriation) in FY06. The “First Steps Fund” Elizabeth referred to was a component of the Family Cost Participation legislation introduced for FY05 that did not make it through the legislative process. Decisions concerning appropriation fund source are made at the Governor/Legislature level. While it is unlikely that this will occur again in FY06, there are no guarantees.

“Overview of FS Funding FY 05” – DESE will request a \$6 million supplemental for FY05 though the amount may be adjusted as more current data becomes available. The 2nd paragraph of this document deals with the SPOE allocations. Rather than a budget, each SPOE’s expenditures will be tracked. One copy of the form was sent around for committee members to view. DESE staff will work with the SPOE staff to address systems issues. Data indicates that for FY04, most SPOE Regions direct service costs per child appeared to be reasonable though there are several regions in the state that appear to have high costs per child that need to be further analyzed. As indicated, the FY05 appropriation begins the year \$6 million short. The supplemental is anticipated, but due to the timing of the supplemental appropriation process there will likely be a timing/cash flow problem in the February/March 2005 timeframe. DESE draws the appropriations down on a quarterly basis which contributes to the cash flow issue. Mostly likely, direct services to children will stop at the point that available funds are expended. Sharon Hailey asked if providers could bill Medicaid directly. The First Steps system is set up to bill all Medicaid requests through the CFO. Joyce stated that Medicaid pays 60% of the approved costs and DESE provides the 40% match funding.

Joyce is going to talk about monitoring more closely and finish reviewing the second document Dale handed out. The new SPOEs have already gone over this information. Expenditure by service report will be a statewide report that shows what the CFO paid out in the last month with a detailed breakdown. Each SPOE will have a considerable amount of data given to them. Another monthly report will be services authorized by service coordinator, by SPOE area. This report was created from a DMH request regarding what kinds of services were being authorized. The CFO will also provide a breakdown by provider caseload. They will be able to show a breakdown by each person within an agency to be able to compare it with independent providers. The last report is the statewide monthly expenditure report (this is the one sheet that Dale passed around earlier for committee members to review). This report is broken

down by SPOE region showing the amount paid for services with the state's running total and remaining balances. There is also a Medicaid receipts column that will be updated each month. The data given on the third page raises questions. There can be valid reasons for this data, but it is something that needs to be looked at to find the reasons. Valeri wants a column that shows the actual child count in addition to the currently displayed 2% child count of census data. Valeri also suggested adding another column with actual child count and % so we can compare the actual child count numbers and not just one area to another when the areas may not be comparable. Melodie indicated that this would be sent to all service coordinators, providers, and SPOEs next week. She asked if anything needed changed before sending this out. Elizabeth Spaugh indicated that she did not feel it needed changed.

These reports are intended to go to all SPOE regions plus be made available on the web for the public to view. First Steps budget issues are not simply a SPOE region problem, but a statewide problem that directly relates to the appropriations process. The regional consultants will work with SPOE regions to analyze this data to help determine expenditure patterns. Updating the Medicaid receipts will not materially affect the SPOE region allocations. The decision was made to not implement the regional level SPOE budget with specific direct service allocations because it appeared in the discussion to date that this could make reallocating funds across SPOE regions more difficult. Federal Regulations will not allow services to be based upon an amount per child allocation. The spreadsheet indicating monthly expenditures by SPOE region will quickly point out the drawdown of available funds and provide a visual representation of remaining funds.

A question was asked regarding the possibility of rebidding the Phase II SPOEs to incorporate the changes that took place with the Phase I rebid. A rebid of the whole state under this new format is under review. Any rebid of the Phase II areas would depend on the outcomes and efficiencies found in the Phase I areas. System changes are usually difficult to make. Service providers "practice" changes which are critical to the success of the First Steps system changes are probably the most difficult to make. Hopefully within the next six months, there will be visible changes and improvement from the Phase I area to project for future changes.

DMH Cost Update – Richard Strecker was asked to give a dollar amount that DMH expends on service coordination. The number he came up with was \$684,600. This was done by looking at numbers at the first of the year, the average caseload of 50 (an average was used because some are strictly FS and others do a blend), and an average salary of \$30,000. There will be more precise numbers later. However, Richard feels that the number he has given is probably as precise as we are going to get. Currently it looks like DMH is providing service coordination for 30% of the children.

DMH Interagency Agreements – Debby Parsons has been working with Richard Strecker on this agreement. There is not a copy to share today. They did not want to do two interagency agreements, one for Phase I and one for Phase II. This agreement will include state level responsibilities, general requirements (hiring service coordinators, same forms), and adding a section for regional responsibilities. The regional responsibilities are between regional centers and SPOE directors. Some of the wording will be pulled from the RFP so the same content appears in both places. Service coordinator responsibilities will be discussed also. Training will come from DESE to DMH central office, then to the DMH service coordinators. The training will be done by the SPOE directors with the SPOE service coordinators. There will also be a section for a dispute resolution. This draft will be done for interagency review by next week.

Contract Updates – Joyce Jackman gave updates on the SPOE and First Steps Consultants contracts. The SPOE contracts have been completed, the training has taken place, and they are operating. The First Steps Consultants contracts are still in the review process. Joyce doesn't have an update beyond that, but she has send over an inquiry to the Office of Administration.

SICC Updates

ICC Nominations – Leslie Elpers received her re-appointment letter. However, DESE still has not heard back from the Governor's office regarding the two parent nominations. Darin Preis' nomination will be sent to the Governor's office.

The number of meetings missed will be indicated on meeting minutes in the future. It was suggested that it would be nice to have the procedures and consequences for missed meetings specifically stated in the bylaws. It was discussed that issues regarding missed meetings should first be brought to the SICC, then Valeri Lane and Elizabeth Spaugh will make the recommendation to pull the member off the SICC to DESE, and then DESE would send a letter to the Governor's office for removal from appointment.

What does attendance mean? If a member is not attending meeting regularly, then the initial step could be to ask the person if they want to continue to serve. The attendance policy in the bylaws currently reads that "termination of membership for Council members who have two consecutive unexcused or three consecutive excused absences". Excused absences are given if a member lets DESE know prior to the meeting that the member is unable to attend the meeting. Unexcused absences were defined as not attending the meeting, but not giving prior notice of being unable to attend the meeting. Vicki Walker, appointed by position, has missed several meeting, but could appoint an alternate. The SICC asked DESE if they contact the Governor's office on this issue. Sherl Taylor was also mentioned as having not been able to attend enough to be an active member on the committee. Leslie made a motion to change the bylaws by taking out the work consecutive from the description of the absences. Melodie Friedebach made a friendly motion to have two or three people review this issue in the bylaws and the issue of having second alternates. Leslie withdrew her motion. It was decided that Melodie and Leslie would work together via e-mail on the bylaws and bring a new set to the next meeting for the SICC to review. DESE will send out the bylaws to all SICC members and anyone with changes or recommendations should to send those to Melodie or Leslie.

LICC Reports – These reports were given from those in attendance at the meeting.

- Callaway County now has an LICC. They have had two meetings with about ten people in attendance.
- The Holt County LICC has been meeting and are involved in several educational activities.
- An update was given on the St. Louis LICC. The main talk has been around the new SPOEs. There has been discussion regarding the previously separate St Louis City and St. Charles County now being one and St. Louis Co being separate. They are waiting to work with the RICC once they are up and running. At the SPOE training it was discussed that they wanted to keep the RICCs separate at least at the beginning. That LICC is currently in a holding pattern. Their last meeting was in May, but there is one scheduled for sometime in July.
- The Northwest area also gave an update. The St. Joseph area is an active LICC and they want to work with the new SPOE. Nothing has been heard from Marion area. There is one there, but it is such a vast area that it is hard to get together. However, they still communicate with each other. Clay, Platte, Ray does not have a real strong LICC. They tend to go to the Jackson County area because they are larger and very active.
- The Stone LICC has not had much activity, but has a meeting coming up.
- Green Christian County has a meeting coming up. They are still writing up the bylaws and doing child find.
- Webster County has an LICC.
- Southeast Missouri LICCs – Scott County has divided up. Cape and Bollinger have just started an LICC. Butler, Wayne and another county are on hold for the summer, but getting quite a few members. Scott County is going to try and maintain what they had. One is starting up in Dunklin County.

Valeri Lane indicated that she wanted an update at the next meeting regarding the LICCs and RICCs, specifically around the St. Louis area. Elizabeth Spaugh asked Melodie the main difference between the LICC and RICC. The LICCs are local and would bring issues to the RICC meetings. Valeri wants to make sure that the RICCs do not make the LICCs disappear. The RICCs will be a more consolidated voice between SPOE office and LICCs. Joyce Jackman stated that it is a contractual part of the RFP to have an RICC with defined membership.

First Steps System Reports/Discussions

Continuous Improvement – This meeting was to focus on what/where in the system some of the problems are and how/what could be changed. Do people really get what First Steps is all about? Melodie went over some draft documents from this meeting. Issues were identified, but the answers need to be found. Valeri wanted to go over the information and next steps. These are issues that have been brought up over and over again, but the next steps are still needed. Our NECTAC contacts are still working on compiling the information. What is going to be done, who will do it, and what are the next steps? The philosophy continuously needs to be put out there, not just in training then dropped. NECTAC is pulling that information together and organizing the next steps which will be sent to the SICC for review at the next meeting. This information will come to DESE first because most of the steps will require some action from DESE first, then the SICC will review and any sub-committees will be formed from there. The belief statements started in the redesign, but some additional recommendations came from this meeting. Melodie stated that the two documents need to be studied to see if there are any changes, updates, and/or improvements and how those need be made. How should the philosophy document evolve from here? This document should go to all families, service coordinators, and providers. The link to the old ones will be sent to the SICC and this will be put on the next meeting for comparison. Melodie would like to have people review this before the next meeting and come to the meeting with suggestion that can then be adopted.

Standards of Practice/IFSP – This committee was smaller with a more focused agenda. They looked at the IFSP and indicators to rate compliance best practice. The committee was divided into sub-groups, each reviewing certain areas of the IFSP. Each group came up with key indicators for their areas. The rating system was: 1 designates poor practice, 3 designates compliance/acceptable, and 5 designates quality practice. NECTAC will combine these into a document and send them back to the committee, along with national experts, for review. During the review of the IFSP, some parts were found to have really good information.

Exemplars will need to be developed for each section of the IFSP. Where will we get these? Valeri indicated that this could be brought up at the SPOE meeting since they work with IFSPs regularly. It could also be used as a training/development for new areas. DESE is still not sure how the exemplars will be created, but it will be a rating scale. Possibly bring providers, service coordinators, and families together to create the exemplars. If you know of someone or you would like to be a part of creating the exemplars, then please get the contact information to Melodie. This will probably take place in August/September.

Legislative Advocacy – This item was put on the agenda because if we need legislation, then now would be the time to start contacting representatives. Melodie has not spoken with DESE Commissioner Kent King yet so she does not know if he has planned any legislation. Valeri asked if Melodie could check and give us an update by the September meeting. Sharon indicated that she is unaware of the timeframes and wordage for upcoming legislation, so she asked if DESE could provide a handout regarding appropriations and legislations. This will be discussed again at the September meeting. Dale Carlson indicated that DESE would be asking for the supplemental again this year. DESE will try to put something together, if there is any upcoming legislation. Does DESE want to write regulations to legislation, if DESE does not feel it will go through anyhow? Dale stated that 31 states are using some form of family cost participation. Melodie suggested that families that are happy with the First Steps program should contact their legislators now and just let them know it is a good program. Sue Allen even suggested sending odd sized envelopes and pictures to local offices, or even visiting them. This can make a difference when the legislators get here in January. This will be discussed again at the September meeting.

Child advocacy day is in January and it is getting a larger crowd. This day is not specifically for First Steps, but it would still be good to have a showing at it. Sue Allen suggested a First Steps day. The state cannot set it up, but an SICC member not with the state could. Valeri asked that this be put on the next agenda. Darin Preis suggested using the LICC listserv to possibly send out a message.

Lack of Providers in Rural Areas – Debby Parsons has comments back from people. However, there are some compliance issues. Debby will continue working on this and can bring it back to later meetings.

Training Activities — Kate Numerick handed out the consultant training plan and gave an update regarding it. This training is still in the planning stages.

Debby passed around a handout and notebook from the new SPOE directors training. DESE will notify people when this information is on the web, so those SPOEs not included in the training will be able to view it. Since the new data system is not up yet, the new SPOEs are being trained on the old system. Debby went over the handout regarding various trainings and the new system trainings. Sue Allen asked if DESE would ever conduct training for a specific discipline. This came up before, but has not been created yet. Kate Numerick pointed out that due to funding issues this probably is not something that would be done at this time. However, there are ideas that could be implemented (mentoring).

Medicaid

SICC Letter to Medicaid – This letter has not been created yet. The question to Medicaid is regarding additional payments to include driving time and if it is a Federal requirement. However, this is not the service. Instead of doing a letter, they are going to try and get a face to face meeting.

September SICC Meeting Agenda Items

Budget

SPOE software demo

Fs consultant

Data Reports for SPOEs (examples if no data available)

LICC/RICC Update for St. Louis Area

Bylaws for review - 1st read

More from NECTAC

CSPD Meeting

Belief Statements

Legislative Advocacy (Update from Melodies conversation with the commissioner)

OSEP Regarding our Annual Report (if member has questions after review the document)

Date of First Steps Day

SPOE Reports (update of prior day meeting)

Issue from Rural Providers – Leslie and Debby

Evaluations Instruments (SPOE meeting) - Item Pam is sending to FS team to discuss

Gretchen Schmidt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Susan Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 3:00.